

THE
COMEDY
OF
WILD OATS;
OR,
THE STROLLING GENTLEMEN:
IN FIVE ACTS.
AS PERFORMED AT THE,
THEATRE-ROYAL,
SMOKE-ALLEY.

M,DCC,XCII.

PRINTED FOR THE BOOKSELLERS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Sir George Thunder,	Mr QUICK,
Rover, — —	Mr LEWIS,
Harry, — —	Mr HOLMAN,
John Dorry, —	Mr WILSON,
Banks, — —	Mr HILL,
Gammon, — —	Mr CUBIT,
Ephraim Smooth, —	Mr MUNDEN,
Sim, — —	Mr BLANCHARD,
Twitch, — —	Mr ROCK,
Lamp, — —	Mr C. POWELL,
Trap, — —	Mr EVATT,
Zachariah, — —	Mr REES,
Three Sailors,	Messrs FARLEY, THOMPSON, and
	MILBOURNE,
Landlord, — —	Mr POWEL,
Waiter, — —	Master SIMMONS,
Midge — —	Mr MACREADY,
Sheriff's Officer, —	Mr CROSS.

WOMEN.

Lady Amaranth, —	Mrs POPE,
Jane, — —	Mrs WELLS,
Amelia, — —	Miss CHAPMAN.

WILD OATS;

OR,

THE STROLLING GENTLEMEN.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*A Parlour in LADY ARAMANTH'S.*

Enter SIR GEORGE THUNDER and JOHN DORY.

Sir George.

I Don't know whose house we've got into here, John, but I think when he knows me, we may hope for some refreshment. Zounds, I'm as dry as touchwood, and to sail at the rate of ten knots an hour, over stubble and farrow, from my own house, but half a league on this side of Gosport, and not to catch these deserters that received the king's bounty and run from their ships.

John. You've ill luck.

Sir Geo. Mine, you swab.

John. Ah, you've money and gold, but grace and good fortune have shook hands with you these nineteen years, for that rogue's trick you play'd Miss Amelia, by deceiving her with a sham marriage, when you pass'd yourself for Capt. Seymor, then putting to sea, leaving

leaving her to break her heart, then marrying another lady.

Sir Geo. But was I not forc'd to that by my father?

John. Ay, because she had a great fortune—her death was a judgment upon you.

Sir Geo. Why, you impudent dog-fish—upbraid me for running into false bay, when you was my pilot, was'n't you—even got me the mock clergyman that performed the sham marriage with Amelia?

John. (*aside*) You think so, but I took care to bring a real clergyman.

Sir Geo. But is this a time or place for your lecture?—at home, abroad, at sea and land, will you still badger me? Mention my Wild Oats again, and I'll—you scoundrel, since the night my bed-curtains took fire when you were my boatswain aboard the Eagle, you've got me quite into leading-strings—you snatch'd me up on deck, toss'd me into the sea to save me from being burnt, and I was almost drown'd.

John. You would, but for me.

Sir Geo. Yes, you dragg'd me out by the ear, like a water-dog. Last week, because you saw the tenth bottle uncork'd, you rush'd in among my friends, and ran away with me, and the next morning Capt. O'Shanaghan sends me a challenge, for quitting my chair when he was toast-master—so to save me from the head-ach, you'd like to have got my brains blown out.

John. Oh, very well—be burnt in your bed, and tumble into the water, like a tight fellow as you are,
and

and poison yourself with floe juice, see if John cares a piece of mouldy biscuit about it. But I thought you had laid yourself up in ordinary, retired to live quiet upon your estate, and had done with sea affairs.

Sir Geo. John, a man should forget his own convenience for his country's good.

John. But I wish you hadn't made me your valet de chambre—no sooner was I got on shore, after five years dashing upon rocks, shoals, and breakers, then you set me upon a hard trotting cart-horse, that has tofs'd me up and down like an old bum-boat in the Bay of Biscay—and here's nothing to drink after all. Because at home you keep open house, you think every body else does the same.—Holloa, holloa—I'll never cease piping till it calls a drop to wet my whistle.

[Exit.]

Sir Geo. Yes, as John Dory remarks, I fear my trip through life will be attended with heavy squalls and foul weathers—When my conduct to poor Amelia comes athwart my mind, it's a hurricane for all that day, and when I turn in at night the ballad of William and Margaret's Ghost (*sings*)—Oh, zounds, the dismals are coming upon me, and I can't get a cheering glass to—Holloa!

Enter EPHRAIM SMOOTH.

Eph. Friend, what would'st thou have?

Sir Geo. Have—why, I would have grog.

Eph. Neither man nor woman of that name abideth here.

Sir Geo.

Sir Geo. Ha, ha, ha! Man nor Woman—then if you'll bring me Mr Brandy and Mrs Water, we'll couple them, and the first child probably will be Master Grog.

Eph. Thou dost speak in parables, which I understand not.

Sir Geo. Sheer off with your sanctified poop, and send the gentleman of the house.

Eph. The owner of this mansion is a maiden and she approacheth.

Enter LADY AMARANTH.

Lady A. Do I behold—it is—how dost thou do, uncle?

Sir Geo. Is it possible you can be my niece Lady Maria Amaranth Thunder?

Lady A. I'm the daughter of thy deceas'd brother, Loftus, called Earl Thunder, but no Lady—my name is Mary.

Sir Geo. But, zounds how is all this—unexpectedly find you in a strange house, of which old Sly tells me you're mistress, turn'd quaker, and disown your title.

Lady A. Thou knowest the relation to whose care my father left me.

Sir Geo. Well, I know our cousin, old Dovehouse, was a quaker, but didn't suspect he would have made you one.

Lady A. Being now gathered to his fathers, he did bequeath unto me his worldly goods, among them this mansion, and the lands around it.

Eph.

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Eph. So thou becomest and continuest one of the faithful. I'm executor of his will, and by it cannot give thee possession of these goods but upon these conditions.

Sir Geo. Tell me of your thee's and thou's, quaker's will's, and manfions—I say, girl, though on the death of your father, my eldest brother Loftus Earl Thunder, from your being a female, his title devolves to his next brother, Robert; though as a woman you can't be an Earl, nor as a woman you can't make laws for your sex nor for our sex, yet, as the daughter of a peer, you are, and by heavens shall be called Lady Maria Amaranth Thunder.

Eph. Thou makest too much noise, friend.

Sir Geo. Dam'me, call me friend, and I'll bump your block against the capstan.

Eph. Yea, this is a man of danger—I will leave Mary to abide it.

Sir Geo. S'fire, my Lady.

Lady A. Title is vanity.

Enter ZACHARIAH.

Zach. Shall thy cook this day dress certain birds of the air called woodcocks, and ribs of the oxen like-wife?

Lady A. All—my uncle sojourneth with me peradventure, and my meal shall be a feast, friend Zachariah.

Zach. My tongue shall say so, friend Mary.

Sir Geo. Sir George Thunder bids thee remember to call thy mistress Lady Amaranth. (*Strikes him.*)

B

Zach.

Zach. Verily, George.

Sir Geo. George, firrah.—Though a younger brother, the honour of knighthood was my reward for placing the glorious British flag over that of a daring enemy—therefore address me—

Zach. Yea, good George.

Sir Geo. George and Mary—here's levelling!—here's abolition of title with a vengeance! S'blood, in this house they think no more of an English Knight, than if he was a French Duke.

Lady A. Kinsman, be patient; thou and thy son Henry, whom I have not beheld these twelve years, shall be welcome to my dwelling. Where now abideth the youth?

Sir Geo. At the Naval Academy, at Portsmouth.

Lady A. May I see the young man?

Sir Geo. What, to make a quaker of him? No, no—but hold—as she is a wealthy heiress, her marrying my son Harry will keep up and preserve the title in our family. (*aside*) Would thou be really glad to see him. Thou shalt Mary—John Dory—Ah, here's my valet de chambre.

Enter JOHN DORY.

John. Sir.

Sir Geo. Awaft, old man of war; you must instantly convoy my son from Portsmouth.

John. Then I must first convoy him to Portsmouth, for he happens to be out of dock already.

Sir Geo. What wind ow?

John.

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John. You must know, on our quitting harbour—

Sir Geo. Damn your sea jaw, you marvellous dolphin, give me the contents of your log-book in plain English.

John. Why then, the young 'Squire has cut and run.

Sir Geo. What?

John. Got leave to come to you, and the master did not find out before yesterday, that instead of making for home he had sheer'd off towards London, directly sent notice to you, and Sam has trac'd us all the way here to bring you the news.

Sir Geo. What, a boy of mine quit his guns—I'll grapple him—come John.

Lady A. Order the carriage for mine uncle.

Sir Geo. No, thank ye, my Lady, let your equipage keep up your own dignity—I've horses here, but won't knock them up—next village is the channel for the stage. My Lady, I'll bring the dog to you by the bowsprit, weigh anchor, croud sail, and after him.

[Exit Sir George and John.]

Re-enter EPHRAIM SMOOTH.

Epb. The man of noise doth not tarry—then my spirit is glad.

Lady A. Let Sarah prepare chambers for my kinsman; and hire the maiden for me that thou didst mention.

Epb. I will, for this damsel is passing fair, and hath found grace in mine eyes. Mary, as thou art yet a stranger in this land, and just taken possession of this

estate, the law of society doth command thee to be on terms of amity with thy wealthy neighbours.

Lady A. Yea; but while I entertain the rich, the hearts of the poor shall also rejoice. I myself will now go forth into the adjacent hamlet, and invite all that cometh to good cheer.

Eph. Yea; and I will distribute among the poor, good books.

Lady A. And meat and drink too, friend Ephraim, in the fulness of plenty—they shall join in thanksgiving for those gifts of which I'm unworthy. [Exit.

SCENE.—*A Road.*

Enter HARRY and MIDGE.

Midge. I say, Dick Buskin, harkee, my lad.

Har. What keeps Rover?

Midge. I'm sure I don't know: as you desired, I paid for our breakfast—but the devil's in that fellow, every inn we stop at he will always hang behind chattering with the bar-maid or the chamber-maid.

Har. Or any, or no maid—but he's a worthy lad, and I love him better, I think, than my own brother, had I one.

Midge. Oh, but Dick, mind my boy.

Har. Stop, Midge, though 'twas my orders, when I set out on this scamp with the players, the better to conceal my quality, for you before people to treat me as your companion, yet you at the same time should have had discretion enough to remember when

we

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we are alone that I am your master, and son to Sir George Thunder.

Midge. Sir, I ask your pardon; but by making yourself my equal, I've got so used to familiarity, that I find it curs'd hard to shake it off.

Har. Well, Sir, pray mind that familiarity is all over, my frolic is out, I now throw off the player, and shall return directly. My father must by this time have heard of my departure from the academy at Portsmouth, and though I was deluded away by my rage for acting, 'twas bad of me to give the gay old fellow any cause of uneasiness.

Midge. And, Sir, shall I and you never act another scene together—shall I never again play Sir Harry William Wildair for my own benefit, nor ever again have the pleasure of caneing your honour in the character of Alderman smuggler?

Har. In future, act the part of a smart coat and hat-brusher, or I shall have the pleasure of caneing you in the character of one that gives mighty blows. You were a good servant, but sirrah, I find by letting you crack your jokes and sit in my company, you're grown quite a rascal.

Midge. Yes, Sir, I was a modest well behaved lad, but evil communications corrupt good manners.

Har. Run back and tell Rover to make haste. To bring you down, I'll clap a livery on you—wear that, or find another master.

Midge. Well, Sir, I don't mind wearing a livery. But when one has so long had a halbert, it's damn'd hard to be again put into the rank. *[Aside.*

Har. Well, if my father but forgives me, this three months excursion with the players has shew'd me some life, and a devilish deal of fun—for one circumstance, I shall ever remember it with pleasure—it's bringing me acquainted with Jack Rover—how long he stays—*Jack (calls).* In this forlorn stroller I have discovered qualities that honour human nature, and accomplishments that might grace a prince. My poor friend has often lent me his money; though he supposed me a poor needy devil, that could never be able to pay him. He shan't know who I am till it's in my power to serve him; only the rogue always marr'd the grand design of my frolic—I had no chance among the pretty women where he was; he had the knack of winning their hearts by his gaiety. Though so devilish pleasant in his quotations, which on the moment he dashes in a parody whimsically opposite to every occasion as it happens, I hope he won't find the purse I've hid in his pocket before we part. I dread the moment—but it's come.

Rov. (without) The brisk lightning I.

Har. Aye, there's the rattle—hurried on by the impetuous flow of his own volatile spirits, his life is a rapid stream of extravagant whim, and while the serious voice of humanity prompts his heart to the best actions, his features shine in laugh and levity.—

Enter

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Enter ROVER. Studying Bayes. Jack.

Rov. I'm the bold Thunder.

Har. I am indeed if he knew but all—*(aside)* Keep one standing in the road—

Rov. Beg your pardon, my dear Dick, all the fault of—plague on't, that a man can't sleep and breakfast at an inn, then return to his bed-chamber for his gloves, but there he must find chamber-maids thumping feathers and knocking pillows about, and keep one, when one has affairs and business—upon my soul these girls' conduct to us is intolerable, the very thought brings blood into my face, and when ever they attempt to serve and provoke me so—Dam'me but I will—An't I right Dick?

Har. All in the wrong.

Rov. No matter, that's the universal play all round the wren. But you're so conceited because, by this company we're going to join at Winchester, you're engaged for high tragedy.

Har. And you for Ranger's plumes, and Foppington.

Rov. Our first play is Lear—I was devilish imperfect in Edgar to'ther night at Lymington; I must look it over *(takes out a book)* “Away! the foul fiend follows me”—Holloa! stop a moment, we shall have the whole country after us.

Har. What now?

Rov.

Rov. That rosy-fac'd chamber-maid put me in such a passion, that by heavens I walk'd out of the house and forgot to pay the bill.

Har. Never mind, Rover, it's paid.

Rov. Paid! why neither you nor Midge had money enough.

Har. I tell you 'tis paid.

Rov. You paid—oh! very well, every honest fellow should be a stock purse. Lets push on—ten miles to Winchester—we shall be there by eleven.

Har. Our trunks at the inn are book'd for the Winchester coach.

Rov. Our hero, Tom Stately, stept into the chaise with his tragedy-phiz—ha, ha, ha,—rides Bottikin between our Thalia and Melpomene—but I prefer walking to the car of Thespis. What do you wait for now?

Har. Which is the way?

Rov. Here.

Har. Then I go there. (*point's opposite*)

Rov. Eh.

Har. My dear boy, on this spot, and at this moment, we must part.

Rov. Part!

Har. Rover, you wish me well.

Rov. Well, and suppose so—part.

Har. Yes, part.

Rov. What mystery and grand—what are you at; do you forget, you, Midge, and I are engaged to—
Truncheon

Truncheon the manager, and that the bills are already up with our names to play to night at Winchester.

Har. Jack, you and I hope often to meet on the stage, in assum'd characters, if it's your wish we should ever meet again in our real ones of sincere friends, without asking whither I go, or my motives for leaving you, when I walk up this road, do you turn down that.

Rov. Joke.

Har. I'm ferious—good bye.

Rov. If you repent your engagement with Truncheon, I'll break off too, and go with you wherever—

Har. Attempt to follow me, and even our acquaintance ends.

Rov. Eh.

Har. Don't think of my reasons, only that it must be.

Rov. Have I done any thing to Dick Buskin? leave me.

Har. I'm as much concern'd as you.—Good bye.

Rov. I can't even bid adieu, I wont either, if any cause could have been given—farewel.

Har. Bless my poor fellow—adieu.

Rov. Well-good—oh damnation.

[Exit Rover and Harry.]

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*A Village, with a Cottage and Garden.*

Enter GAMMON and EPHRAIM.

Gammon.

WELL, Master Ephraim, I may depend on thee,
as you quakers never break your word.

Eph. I have spoken to Mary, and she, at my request,
consenteth to take thy daughter Jane for her handmaid.

Gam. That's hearty—I intended to make a present
to the person that does me such a piece of service, but
I sha'n't affront you with it.

Eph. I am meek and humble, and must take affronts.

Gam. Then here's a guinea, Master Ephraim.

Eph. I expected not this; but there's no harm in a
guinea.

Gam. So, I shall get my children off my hands.
My son Sim is robbing me day and night, giving away
my corn and what not among the poor; my daughter
Jane—when girls have nought to do, this mischief love
creeps into their minds, and then, hey, they're for
kicking up their heels.—Sim, son Sim.

Enter SIM.

Sim. Yes, feyther.

Gam. Call your sifter.

Sim. Jane, feyther wants you.

Enter JANE.

Jane. Did you call me?

Gam.

Gam. I often told you both, but its now fettled—you must go into the world and work for your bread.

Sim. Feyther, whatever you think right must be so; and I am content.

Jane. And I'm sure, feyther, I'm willing to do any thing you would have me.

Gam. There's ingratitude for you!—when my wife, your mother, died, I brought you up from the shell, and now that you're fledg'd, you want to fly off and forsake me.

Sim. Why, no, I'm willing to live with you all my days.

Jane. And I'm sure, feyther, if its your desire, I'll never part from you.

Gam. Here's an unnatural pair—what, you want to hang upon me like a couple of leeches, aye, to strip my branches, and leave me a wither'd hawthorn. See who's yonder. (*Exit Sim.*) Jane, Ephraim Smooth has hired you for Lady Amaranth.

Jane. La, then I shall live in the great house.

Gam. Her Ladyship has sent us all presents of good books, here, to read a chapter in; it gives a man patience when he is in a passion. [*gives her a book.*]

Jane. Thank her good Ladyship.

Gam. My being incumbered with you both is the cause why old Banks here won't give me his sister.

Jane. That's a pity; if we must have a step-mother, madam Amelia would make us a very good one—but I wonder how she should refuse you, feyther, for
I'm

I'm fure she thinks you a very portly man, in your scarlet coat and new scratch.

[Retires into the house.]

Gam. However, if Banks still refuses, I have him in my power, I'll turn them out of their cottage yonder, and the bailiff shall procure them a lodging. Here he comes.—

Enter BANKS from the Cottage.

Well, neighbour Banks, once for all, am I to marry your sister?

Banks. That she best knows.

Gam. She says she won't.

Banks. Then I dare say she won't; for though a woman, I never knew her to prevaricate.

Gam. Then she won't have me. Fine thing that you and she, who're little better than paupers, dare to be so damn'd saucy.

Banks. Why, I confess we are poor, but while that's the worst our enemies can say of us, we are content.

[Exit into the garden.]

Gam. Damn it, I wish I had a fair occasion to quarrel with him, I'd make him content with a devil to him—I'd knock him down, send him to a goal, and—but—I'll be up with him.

Enter SIM.

Sim. Oh, feyther, here's one Mr Lamp, a ringleader of the shew-folk's, come from Andover, to act in our village—he wants a barn to play in, if you'll hire him yours.

Gam.

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Gam. Surely, boy, I'll never refuse money; but lest he should engage the great room at the inn, run and tell him—stop, I'll go myself; a short cut through the garden——

Banks. Why, you, or any neighbour is welcome to walk in it, or partake of any thing it produces, but making it a common thoroughfare is——

Gam. Here, son, kick down that gate.

Banks. What!

Gam. Does the lad hear?

Sim. Why, yes, yes.

Gam. Does the fool understand?

Sim. Hang't I'm but young yet, but if understanding teaches me how to wrong my neighbours, I hope I may never live to years of discretion.

Gam. What, you cur, do you disobey your feyther—burst open the garden gate, as I command you.

Sim. Feyther, he that made both you and the garden gate, commands me not to injure the unfortunate.

Gam. Here's an ungracious rogue—then I must do it myself.

Banks. Hold, neighbour—small as the spot is, its now my only possession, and the man shall first take my life, who sets his foot in it against my will.

Gam. I'm in such a passion.

Enter JANE from the House.

Jane. Feyther, if you're in a passion, read the book you gave me.

C

Gam.

Gam. Plague O the wench, but you huffy I'll,—
and you unlucky bud.

[Exeunt Sim and Jane.]

[Gammon goes and stands at the door of the house.]

A Storm of Rain.

Enter ROVER.

Rov. Zounds, here's a pelting shower, and no shelter—poor Tom's a-cold. I'm wet through; here's a good promising house. *(Going to Gammon's house, Gammon prevents his entrance.)*

Gam. Hold, my lad, can't let folks in till I know who they are; there's a public-house not above half a mile on.

Banks. Step in here, young man, my fire is small, but it shall cheer you with a hearty welcome.

Rov. The poor cottager and the substantial farmer. *(Kneels)* Hear nature, dear goddess, hear, if ever you design to make his corn-field fertile, change your purpose; that from the blighted ears no grains may fall, to fat his stubble goose. And when to town he drives his hogs (so like himself) oh let him feel the soaking rain; then he may curse his crimes, to taste and know how sharper than the serpent's tooth is his.—Dam'me, but I'm spouting in the rain all this time.

[Rises and enters into Bank's cottage.]

Gam. Ah, neighbour, you'll soon scratch a beggar's head, if you harbour every mad vagrant, this may be one of the footpads that it seems have got about the country, but I'll have an execution and seize on thy
goods

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goods this day, my honest neighbour.—Eh—the sun strikes out—quite clear'd up.

Enter JANE.

Jane. La! Feyther if there isn't Lady Amaranth's chariot coming down the village.

Gam. Oh! thou huffy.

Jane. Bless me, Feyther, no time for anger now, here's Lady Amaranth's chariot,—la it stops.

Gam. Her Ladyship is coming out and walks this way, she may wish to rest herself in my house—*Jane* we must always make rich folks welcome.

Jane. I'll run in and get all the things to rights, but Feyther your cravat and wig is all—

[Adjusts Gammon and then exit into the house.]

Enter TWITCH.

Twitch. Well, master Gammon, as you desired me, I am come to serve this copy of a writ; and arrest master Banks, where is he?

Gam. Yes! now I'm determin'd on't—waunts, stand aside, I'll speak to you a-non.

Enter LADY AMARANTH.

Lady A. Friend Jane, whom I have taken to be my hand-maid, is thy Daughter.

Gam. So her mother said, an't please your Ladyship.

Lady A. Ephraim Smooth acquainted me, thou'rt a wealthy yeoman.

Gam. My Lady, I make shift to pay my rent.

Lady A. Being as yet a stranger on these my lands, I am come to see thy hamlet, to behold with mine

eyes, the distresses of my poor tenants, I wish to relieve their wants.

Gam. Right, your Ladyship, for charity hides a deal of sin, how good of you to think of the poor, that's so like me, I'm always contriving how to relieve my neighbours—you must lay Banks in prison to night.

[*Aside to Twitch.*

Enter JANE.

Jane. And if it please you, will your Ladyship enter our humble dwelling and rest your Ladyship.

Gam. Do my Lady, to receive so great a Lady from her chariot is an honour, I dreamt not of, though—for the hungry and weary-foot travellers my doors are always open, and my morsel ready.

Lady A. Thou art benevolent, and I will enter thy doors with satisfaction.

Gam. Knock, and when he comes out touch him.

[*Aside to Twitch.*

[*Exeunt all but Twitch into Gammon's house.*

Twitch. Eh, where's the writ. [*Knocks at Bank's door.*

Banks. Master Twitch, what's your business with me?

Twitch. Only a little business here against you.

Banks. Me!

Twitch. Farmer Gammon has brought a thirty pound bank note of hand of yours.

Banks. I did not think his malice could have stretched so far; I thought the love he possess'd for my Sister might. Why it's true, master Twitch—to lend our indigent cottagers small sums, when they were unable
to

to pay their rent, I got a lawyer Quirk to procure me the money, and hoped their Industry would have put it in my power to take up the note before now; however I'll go round and try what they can do, and call on you and settle it.

Twitch. No, no, that won't do; you must go with me.

Rov. (From the cottage) Old gentleman come quick, or I'll draw another bottle of your currant wine.

Twitch. You'd better not, make no noise, and go with me.

Enter ROVER.

Rov. Oh, you're here—rain over—quite fair,—I'll take a snuff of the open air too—Eh! what's the matter?

Twitch. What's that to you?

Rov. What's that to me?—why you're very unmannerly.

Twitch. Here's a rescue.

Banks. Nay, my dear Sir, I'd wish you not to bring yourself into trouble about me.

Twitch. Now, since you don't know what's civil—if the debt an't paid, to jail you go.

Rov. My kind hospitable, good old host, to jail—what's the fun you scoundrel?

Twitch. Better words, or I'll—

Rov. Stop, if you dare to utter another word, good or bad, except to tell me what's your demand upon
C 3 this

this Gentleman, and I'll give you the greatest beating, you ever had since you commenced rascal.

Twitch. Why, master, I don't want to quarrel with you because——

Rov. You'll get nothing by it, do you know, you villain, that I am this moment the greatest man living.

Twitch. Who, pray?

Rov. I am the bold Thunder, Sirrah——know that I carry my prize of gold in my coat pocket, though Dam'me if I know how it came there (*aside, takes the purse out*) There's twenty pictures of his Majesty; therefore, in the Kings Name, I free his liege subject, and now who am I?

Twitch. Ten pieces short, my master; but if you're a housekeeper, I'll take this and your bail.

Rov. Then for bail you must have a housekeeper——what's to be done?——

Enter GAMMON.

Oh, here's old little hospitality——I know you're a house-keeper, though your fire-side was too warm for me. Look here, some rapacious griping rascal has had this worthy gentleman arrested——now, a certain good-for-nothing rattling fellow has paid twenty guineas of the sum, you pass your word for the other nine, we'll run back into the old gentleman's house, and over his currant wine, our first toast shall be, liberty to the honest debtor, and confusion to the hard-hearted creditor.

Gam. I shan't.

Rov. No——what's your name?

Gam.

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Gam. Gammon. [Exit.

Rov. Then, dam'me, you're the Hampshire hog.
'Sdeath, what shall we do to extricate?—Damn the money.

Enter LADY AMARANTH from the house.

Lady A. What tumult's this?

Rov. A lady—Ma'am, your most obedient humble servant—a quaker too—they're generally kind and humane, and that face is a prologue to a play of a thousand good acts—may-be, she'd help us here (*aside*) Ma'am, you must know that I know this gentleman—I mean, he got a little behind hand, from bad crops, as every honest well-principled man may, and from rain lodging in his corn, and his cattle from murrain and rot—rot the murrain, you understand—and then in steps I with my—in short, Madam, I'm the most out of the way story-teller in the world, when myself is the hero of the tale.

Tawich. Mr Banks has been arrested for thirty pounds, and this gentleman has paid twenty guineas of the sum.

Banks. My litigious neighbour to expose me thus!

Lady A. The young man and maiden within have pictur'd thee as a man of irreproachable morals, tho' unfortunate.

Rov. Madam, he's an honest fellow, I've known him above forty years—he's the best hand at stirring a fire—if you was to taste his currant wine.

Banks.

Banks. Madam, I never aspired to an enviable rank in life, yet hitherto pride and prudence kept me above the reach of pity—but obligation from a stranger—

Lady A. Is he really a stranger, and attempt to free thee? Friend, thou hast usurped a right, which here alone belongeth to me; as I enjoy the blessing which these lands produce, I own also the heart-delighting privilege of dispensing those blessings to the wretched. Thou madest thyself my worldly banker, and no cash of mine in thy hands, but there I ballance my account. *(takes a note from a pocket-book.)*

Rov. Madam, my master pays me, nor dare I take money from any other hand, without injuring his honour, or disobeying his command.

Run, run, Orlando, carve on ev'ry tree,

The fair, the chaste, the inexpressive she. *[Exit.]*

Banks. *(to Twich)* But, Sir, I insist you'll return him his money—Stop. *(going)*

Twich. Aye, stop, *(holds Banks)*

Lady A. Where dwelleth he?

Banks. I fancy, Ma'am, where he can; I understand, from his discourse, that he is on his way to join a company of actors in the next town.

Lady A. A profane stage player with such a gentle generous heart, yet so whimsically wild, like the unconscious rose, modestly shrinking from the recollection of its own grace and sweetness.

Enter

Enter JANE, from Gammon's House.

Jane. Now, my Ladyship, I'm fit to attend your Ladyship.

Lady A. This maiden may find out for me whither he goeth (*aside*.) Call on my steward, and thy legal demands shall be satisfied. [*To Twich, who exits.*]

Jane. Here, coachman, drive up my Lady's chariot nearer our door. (*calling off*)

Lady A. Friend, be chearful, thine and thy sister's sorrows shall be but as an April shower.

[*Exit Banks into his house, Lady A. and Jane.*]

SCENE.—*Inside of an Inn.*

Enter WAITER and ROVER.

Rov. Hilloa, friend, when does the coach set out for London?

Wait. In about an hour, Sir.

Rov. Has the Winchester coach passed by yet?

Wait. No, Sir.

[*Exit Waiter.*]

Rov. That's lucky, my trunk is here still—then I will not, since I've lost the fellowship of my friend Dick Buskin, I'll travel no more—I'll try a London audience—who knows but I may get an engagement—this celestial lady quaker must be rich, and how ridiculous for such a poor dog as I am even to think of her—how Dick would laugh at me, if he knew. I dare say by this she has released my kind host from the gripe—I should like to be certain, though.

Enter

Enter LANDLORD.

Land. You'll dine here, Sir—I'm honest Bob Johnson—kept the sun these twenty years—excellent dinner on table at two.

Row. Yet my love indeed is appetite; I'm as hungry as the sea, I can digest as much.

Land. Hungry as the sea—then you won't do for my Shilling ordinary. Sir, there's a very good ordinary at the Saracen's head at the end of the town.—Shou'dn't have thought, indeed, of hungry foot travellers to eat like—Coming, Sir. [*Exit.*]

Row. I'll not join this company at Winchester—no, I'll not stay in the country, hopeless ever to expect a look, except of scorn, from this lady. I wonder if she's found out that I'm a player—I'll take a touch at the London theatre, the public there are candid and generous, and before my merit can have time to create enemies, I'll save money, and a fig for the sultan and sophy.

Enter JANE, SIM following.

Jane. Aye, that's he.

Row. But if I fail, by heavens I'll overwhelm the manager, his empire, and himself, in one prodigious ruin.

Jane. Ruin! O, Lord!

Sim. What can you expect else, when you follow the young men—I've dogg'd you all the way.

Jane. Well, wasn't I sent.

Sim. O, yes, you were sent—very likely—who sent you?

Jane.

Jane. I won't tell it's my Lady, because she bid me not. (*aside.*)

Sim. I'll keep you from shame—A fine life I should have in the parish, rare fleeing, if a sister of mine should stand some Sunday at church in a white sheet—and to all their flouts what could I say?

Rev. Thus, I say—My sister's wrong'd, my sister blows a bella born as high and noble as the attorney; do her justice, or, by the gods, I'll lay a scene of blood shall make this hay-mow horrible to beadles.—Say that, young Chamont.

Sim. Ecod, I believe its full moon. You go home to your place, and mind your business. (*to Jane.*)

Jane. My Lady will be so glad I found him—I don't wonder at it, he's a fine spoken man.

Sim. Hang it, will you stand grinning here at the wild bucks.

Jane. Will you be quiet, the gentleman might wish to send her Ladyship a compliment: an't please you, Sir, if it is even a kiss between you and me, it shall go safe; for though you should give it to me, brother Sim can take it my Lady.

Sim. La, will you go? (*puts her off*)

Rev. To a nunnery, go—to a nunnery, go go—I'm cursedly out of spirits—but hang sorrow, I may as well divert myself—'tis meat and drink for me to see a clown—Shepherd was't ever at court.

Sim. Not I.

Rev. Then thou art damned.

Sim.

Sim. Eh!

Rov. Yes, like an ill-roasted egg, all on one side:
Ah, little hospitality!

Enter GAMMON.

Gam. Eh, where's the shewman that wants my barn?
—Ah, son Sim.

Rov. Is he your son, young Clodpole—take him to
your wheat-stacks, and there teach him manners.

Gam. Oh, thou art the fellow that would bolt out
of the dirty roads into people's houses——Sim's
schooling is mightily thrown away, if he has not more
manners than thou.

Sim. Why, feyther, it is one of the players, he acted
Tom Fool in King Larry, t'other night at Lymington—I
thought I know'd him, by the face, thof he had a straw
hat and a blancket about'n.—Ha, how comical that was
you said.

Rov. Pillicock sat upon Pillicock-hill—pillo—loc—
loc.

Sim. Why, feyther, that's it, he's at it again——
feyther, laugh.

Gam. Hold your tongue, boy, I believe he's no
better than he shou'd be; the moment I saw him, says
I to myself, he's a rogue.

Rov. There thou spokest truth to thyself for once in
thy life.

Gam. I'm glad you confests it; but her Ladyship
shall have all the vagrants whipt out of the country.

Rov.

Rov. Vagrants, wretch—despite overwhelm thee—only squint, and by heaven I'll beat thy blown-up body till it rebound like a tennis ball.

Sim. Beat my feyther—no, no—thou must first beat me. (*pulls off his coat.*)

Rov. Though love cool, friendship fall off, brother, divide, subjects rebel, oh, never let the sacred bond be crack'd betwixt son and father. Thou art an honest reptile—(*to Sim*) I never a father's protection knew—never had a father to protect.

Sim. Ecod, he's not acting now.

Enter LANDLORD, with book, pen, and ink.

Gam. Landlord, is this Mr Lamp here?

Land. I've just opened a bottle for him in the other parlour. [*Exit Gam.*]

Sim. (*to Rov.*) Gi's thy hand—I like thee, I don't know how it is, I think I could lose my life for him—but mus'n't let feyther be lickt neither. (*Exit after his father, clapping his hands and shouting*) Pillicock fat upon Pillicock Hill.

Rov. I'll make my entrance on the London stage boards in Bayes; yes, I shall have no competitor against me. Egad, its very hard, that a gentleman and an author can't come to teach them, but he must break his noise, and all that. So the players are gone to dinner. (*to Landlord*)

Land. No such people frequent the sun, I assure you, Sir.

D

Rov.

Rov. Sun, moon, and stars—now mind the eclipse, Mr Johnfon.

Land. I heard nothing of it, Sir.

Enter WAITER.

Wait. Sir, two gentlemen in the parlour wishes to speak with you. (*to Rov.*)

Rov. I attend them with all respect and duty.

[*Exit Waiter.*]

Land. Sir, you go in the stage; as we book the passengers, what name?

Rov. I'm the bold Thunder.

[*Exit.*]

Land. (*writing*) Mr Thunder.

Enter JOHN DORY.

John. I want two places in the stage coach, because I and another gentleman are going a journey.

Land. Just two vacant—what name?

John. Avast, I go upon deck, but let me see who is my master's messmates in the cabin. (*reads.*) Captain. M'Clallough, Counsellor Flaherghan, Miss Gosling, Mr Thunder—what's this—speak, man, is there any person of that name going?

Land. Book'd him this moment.

John. If our voyage should be at an end before we begin; if this Mr Thunder should be my master's son—what sort of a gentleman is he?

Land. An odd sort of a gentleman—I suspect he's one of the players.

John. True, Sam said 'twas some of the players people forced him from Portsmouth school—it must

be

be the 'Squire—shew me where he's moor'd, my old pursuer. [Exeunt.

SCENE—*A Room.*

LAMP and TRAP discovered.

Trap. This same old Gammon seems a furly spark.

Lamp. No matter; his barn will hold full thirty pounds, and if we can but engage this young fellow, this Rover, he'll cram it every night he plays—he's certainly a very good actor. Now, Trap, you must enquire out a good carpenter, and be brisk about the building. I think we shall have smart business, as we stand so well for women too—Oh, here he comes.

Trap. Knap him on any terms.

Enter ROVER.

Rov. Gentlemen, your most obedient—the waiter told me——

Lamp. Pray, sit down, good Sir. Sir, to our better acquaintance. (*drinks*)

Rov. Hav'n't a doubt, Sir.

Lamp. Only suffer me to put up your name to play with us for six nights, and twelve guineas are yours.

Rov. I thank you; I must confess your offer is liberal, but my friends have flattered me into a sort of opinion, that encourages me to take a touch at the capital.

Lamp. Oh, my dear Sir, a London Theatre is very dangerous ground.

Rov. Why, I may fail, and gods may groan, and ladies cry, *the awkward creature*; but should I top my part thus, shall not gods applaud, and ladies sigh, *the*

charming fellow, and the managers take me by the hand, and treasures smile upon me, as they count the shining guineas.

Lamp. But suppose——

Row. Aye, suppose the contrary, I have a certain friend here in my coat pocket—(*feels for it*)—Zounds, where is it—Oh, the devil, I gave it to discharge my kind host. Going to London, and not master of five shillings. (*aside*) But, Sir, to return to the twenty pounds.

Lamp. Twenty pounds! well, be it so.

Row. Sir, I engage with you; call a rehearsal when and where you please, and I'll attend you.

Lamp. Sir, I'll step for the cast book, and you shall choose your characters.

Trap. And I'll write the play-bill directly.

[*Exeunt Lamp and Trap.*]

Row. Since I must remain here some time, and hav'n't the most distant hope of ever speaking to this goddess again, I wish I had enquired her name, that I might know how to keep out of her way.

Enter LANDLORD and JOHN DORY.

Land. There's the gentleman.

John. Very well. (*Exit Land.*) What cheer, master 'Squire.

Row. What cheer, eh, my hearty.

John. The very face of his father—And ar'n't you ashamed of yourself?

Row. Why, yes, I am sometimes.

John.

John. Do you know, if I had you at the gangway, I'd give you a neater dozen than ever you got from your school-master's cat-o-nine-tails.

Rev. You wou'dn't, sure.

John. I would, sure.

Rev. Indeed, pleasant enough. Who is this genius?

John. I've dispatch'd a shallop to tell Lady Amaranth you're here.

Rev. You hav'n't.

John. I have.

Rev. Now who the devil's this Lady Amaranth?

John. I expect her chariot every moment, and when it comes, you'll get into it, and I'll fet you down gently at her house, then I'll have obeyed my orders, and hope your father will be satisfied.

Rev. My father—who is he, pray?

John. Psha, leave off your fun, and prepare to ask his pardon.

Rev. Ha, ha, ha!—my worthy friend, you're quite wrong in this affair;—upon my word, I'm not the person you take me for. (*going.*)

John. You don't go, though you've got your name down in the stage-coach book, Mr Thunder.

Rev. Mr Thunder—stage-coach book—this must be some curious mistake—ha, ha, ha!

John. Oh, my lad, your father, Sir George, will soon change your note.

Rev. Will he—he must first give me one. Sir George—then my father's a Knight, it seems—very good faith

—ha, ha, ha! I'm not the gentleman you think, upon my honour.

John. I ought not to think you any gentleman, for giving your honour in a false word.

Enter WAITER.

Wait. Her Ladyship's carriage is at the door, and I fancy, Sir, it's you the coachman wants. (*to John.*)

John. Yes, it's me. (*exit Waiter.*) I attend your honour.

Rov. The choice is made, and I've my Ranger's drefs in my trunk. Cousin of Buckingham, thou sage grave man.

John. What.

Rov. Since you will buckle fortune on my back, to bear the burthen whether I will or no, I must have patience to endure the load; but if black scandal, or foul-fac'd——

John. Black, foul-fac'd—dam'me, my face was as fair as yours before I went to sea.

Rov. Your mere enforcement shall acquaintance me.

John. Man, don't stand preaching parson Palmer, come to the chariot.

Rov. Aye, to the chariot bear me—Bucephalus among the billows. [*Exeunt.*]

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE.—LADY AMARANTH'S *House*.*Enter* LADY AMARANTH *and* EPHRAIM.*Lady A.*

THO' thou hast settled that distressed gentleman's debts, let his sister come unto me, and remit a quarter's rent to all my tenants.

Eph. As thou biddest it, I have discharged from the pound, the widow's cattle; but shall I let the law-suit drop against the farmer's son, who did shoot the pheasant?

Lady A. Yea; but instantly turn from my service the gamekeeper's man that did kill the fawn while it was eating from his hand—we should hate guile, tho' we love venison.

Eph. Since the death of old Dovehouse (who, though one of the faithful, was an active man) this part of the country is infested with covetous men, called robbers; and I have, in thy name, said unto the people, whoever apprehendeth one of these, I will reward, yea, with thirty pieces of gold. (*knocking without*.) That beating of one brass against another at thy door, proclaimeth the approach of vanity, whose heart swelleth at an empty sound. [Exit.]

Lady A. But my heart is possessed with the idea of that wandering youth, whose benevolence induced him

him to part with, perhaps his all, to free the unhappy debtor. His person is amiable, his addressee (according to the worldly modes) formed to pleasure and to delight—but he's poor—is that a crime?—perhaps meanly born—but one good action is an illustrious pedigree. —I feel I love him, and in that word are birth, fame, and riches.

Enter JANE.

Jane. Oh, Madam, my Lady, an't please you.

Lady A. Did'st thou find the young man, that I may return him the money he paid for my tenant?

Jane. I found him, Ma'am, and I found him, and he talked of what he said.

Lady A. What did he say?

Jane. He said, Ma'am, and says he—I'll be hang'd, Ma'am, if he did'n't talk about ruin, now I think of that—but if he had'n't gone to London in the stage coach—

Lady A. Is he gone?

Enter JOHN DORY.

John. Oh, my Lady, mayhap John Dory is not the man to be sent after young gentlemen that scamper from school, and run about the country a play acting. Pray walk up stairs, Master Thunder.

Lady A. Hast thou brought my kinsman hither?

John. Well then, I ha'n't—will you only walk up, if you please, Master Harry?

Jane.

Jane. Will you walk up, if you please, Master Harry?

Lady A. Friendship requireth, yet I'm not disposed to communicate with company.

Jane. Oh, bless me, Ma'am, if it isn't——

Enter ROVER, distressed.

Rov. 'Tis I, Hamlet, the Dane—thus far into the bowels of the land have we march'd on——John, the bloody devouring bear.

John. He call'd me bull in the coach.

Rov. This lady Amaranth——by heavens, the very angel quaker.

Lady A. The generous youth, my cousin Harry.

John. He's for you, make the most of him.

[*Rover crosses over to Lady A. John whispers him on left hand side.*]

John. Hark'ee—she's as rich as an India-man, and I tell you, your father wishes you would grapple her by the heart. There's an engagement between these two vessels, but little Cupid's the only man that's to take minutes, so come. (*to Jane.*)

Jane. Ma'am, a'n't I to wait on you?

John. No, my lass, your to wait on me.

Jane. Wait on you!—lack-a-day, am I?

John. By this, Sir George is come to the inn. Without letting the younker know, I'll bring him here, and surprise both father and son with a joyful meeting (*aside.*) Now court her you mad devil. (*to Rover*) Come, now usher me down like a lady. (*to Jane.*)

Jane.

Jane. Yes, there's love between them, I see it in their eyes—bless the dear couple—this way, Mr Sailor gentleman. [*Exeunt Jane and John.*]

Rev. (*aside*) By heavens, a most delectable woman.

Lady A. Cousin, when I saw thee in the village free the sheep from the wolf, why did'st thou not tell me thou wer't son to my uncle, Sir George?

Rev. Because, my Lady, I did not know it myself.

Lady A. Why wou'd'st thou vex thy father, and quit thy school?

Rev. A truant disposition—good my Lady brought me from Wittemberg.

Lady A. Thy father designs thee for his dangerous profession—but is thy inclination turned to the voice of trumpets and sounds of mighty slaughter?

Rev. Why, Ma'am, as for old Boreas, my dad, when the blast of war blows in his ears, he's a tyger in his fierce resentment; for me, I think it a pity—so it is—that villainous saltpetre should be digg'd out of the bowels of the harmless earth, which many a good tall fellow hath destroy'd, with wound, and guns, and drums—Heaven save the mark!

Lady A. Indeed thou art tall, my cousin, and grown of comely stature—our families have long been separated.

Rev. They have, since Adam, I believe. (*aside*)—then, Lady, let that sweet bud of love now ripen to a beauteous flower.

Lady A. Love!

Rev.

THE STROLLING GENTLEMEN. 41

Row. Excellent wench—perdition catch my soul—but I do love thee ; and when I love thee not—Chaos is come again.

Lady A. Thou art of a happy disposition.

Row. If I were now to die, it were to be happy!—Let our senses dance in concert to the joyful minutes, and this, and this, the only discord make (*embracing.*)

Enter JANE, with cake and wine.

Jane. Ma'am, an't please you, Mr Zachariah bid me——

Row. Why you fancy yourself Cardinal Woolsey in this family.

Jane. No, Sir, I'm not Cardinal Woolsey, I'm only my Lady's maid here.

Row. A bowl of cream for your Catholic Majesty's.

Jane. Cream? no, Sir ;—that's wine and water.

Row. You get no water—take the wine, great Potentate. (*Gives Lady A. a glass, and drinks*)

Jane. Madam, my father begs leave——

Row. Go, go, thou shallow Pomona. [*Exit Jane.*

Enter GAMMON and LAMP.

Row. Eh! Zounds, my Manager!

Gam. I hope her Ladyship has'n't found out 'twas I had Banks arrested. (*aside*) Would your Ladyship give leave for this honest man and comrades to act a few plays in the town, 'cause I have let 'em my barn——'twill be some little help to me, my Lady.

Row. My Lady, I understand these affairs, leave me to settle them.

Lady A.

Lady A. True, these are delusions, as a woman, I understand not—but by my cousin's advice I will abide—ask his consent.

Gam. So, I must pay my respects to the young 'Squire (*aside*). An't please your honour, if a poor man, like me (*bows*) dare offer his humble duty.

Rov. Can't thou bow to a vagrant, Eh, little Hospitality.

[*Exit Gam.*

Lamp. Please your honour, if I may presume to hope, you'll be graciously pleased to take our little squadron under your honour's protection.

Lady A. What say'st thou, Henry?

Rov. Aye, where's Henry?—true—that's me—strange I should always forget my name, and not half an hour ago I was christen'd (*aside*.) Hark ye, do you play yourself, fellow?

Lamp. Yes, Sir, and I've just now engaged a new actor, one Mr Rover—such an actor.

Rov. If such is your best actor, you sha'n't have my permission—my dear Madam, the damn'dest fellow in the world—get along out of the town, or dam'me, I'll have you all, man, woman, and child, rag and fiddle-stick, clapp'd into the whirligig.

Lady A. Good man, abide not here.

Pov. What, you scoundrel!—now if this new actor you brag of, that crack of your company, was any thing like a gentleman——

Lamp. Why it can't be him sure!—

Rov.

Row. It is, my dear friend, if I was really the poor strolling dog you thought me, I should tread your four boards, and crow the cock of your barn-door fowl; but, as fate has ordain'd, I'm a gentleman, and son to Sir——what the devil's my father's name? (*aside*).——You must be content to murder Shakespeare, without making me an accomplice.

Lamp. But, my most gentle Sir, I and my treasurer, Trap, have trumpeted your fame ten miles round the country—the bills are posted, the candles bought, the stage built, the fiddlers engag'd—all on the tip-toe of expectation——we should have to-morrow night an overflow—ay, thirty pounds, dear worthy Sir; you would not go to ruin a whole community and their families, that now depends on the exertion of your brilliant talents.

Row. I never was uniform but in one maxim, that is, though I do little good, to hurt nobody but myself.

Lady A. Since thou hast promised, much as I prize the adherence to the customs in which I was brought up, thou shalt not sully thy honour, by a breach of thy word; for truth is more shining than beaten gold—play, if it can bring good to these people.

Row. Shall I?

Lady A. This falleth out well, for I have bidden all the gentry round unto my house warming, and these pleasantries may afford them innocent and chearful entertainment.

Rov. True, my Lady, your guests a'n't Quakers, though you are; and when we ask people to our house we study to please them, not ourselves; but if you do furnish up a play or two, the Muses sha'n't honour that churlish fellow's barn.

Lady A. Barn! no, that gallery shall be thy theatre; and, in spite of the grave doctrine of Ephraim Smooth, my friends and I will behold and rejoice in thy pranks, my pleasant cousin.

Rov. My kind, my charming Lady!—Hey!—brighten up bully Lamp, Carpenters, Taylors, Managers, distribute your box tickets for my Lady's gallery—come, gentle cousin, the actors are at hand, and by their shew you shall know all that you are like to know.

[*Exit Lamp. Excunt Lady and Rover.*]

SCENE.—*An Apartment in an Inn.*

Enter HARRY and MIDGE.

Har. Though I went back to Portsmouth Academy with a contrite heart to continue my studies, yet, from my father's angry letter, I dread the woeful storm at our first meeting. I fancy the people at the inn don't recollect me; it reminds me of my pleasant friend, poor Jack Rover; I wonder where he is now.

Midge. And brings to my mind a certain strolling acquaintance of mine, poor Dick Buskin.

Har. Then I desire, Sir, you'll turn Dick Buskin out of your head.

Midge.

Midge. Can't, Sir, the dear, good-natur'd, wicked son of—I beg your honour's pardon.

Har. Midge, you must, soon as I'm dress'd, step out and enquire whose house my father is at—I didn't think he had any acquaintance in this part of the country; found what humour he's in, and how the land lies, before I venture into his presence.

Enter WAITER.

Wait. Sir, the room is ready for you to dress. [*Exit.*

Har. I shall only throw off my boots, and you'll shake a little powder in my hair.

Midge. Then, hey puff, I shoulder my curling irons.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter SIR GEORGE and LANDLORD.

Sir Geo. I can hear nothing of these deserters—by my first intelligence, they'll not venture up to London; they must still be lurking about the country—Landlord have any suspicious-looking persons put in at your house?

Land. Yes, Sir, now and then.

Sir Geo. What do you do with them?

Land. Why, Sir, when a man calls for liquor, that I think has got no money, I make him pay before-hand.

Sir Geo. Damn your liquor, you self-interested porpoise, chattering about your own private affairs, when public good, or fear of general calamity, should be the only compass; these fellows I am in pursuit of, run from their ships; and if our navy is unmanned, what becomes of you and your house, you dunghill cormorant?

Land. This is a very abusive sort of a Gentleman, but he has a full pocket, or he wou'd not be so saucy (*aside*). [Exit.]

Sir Geo. This rascal, I believe, does not know I'm Sir George Thunder—wind, still variable, blows my affairs athwart each other, not to know what's become of my runagate son Harry—and when my Lady niece, squeezing up the plumage of our illustrious family in her little mean Quaker's bonnet—I must to town after—'Sblood! when I catch my son Harry—Oh, here's John Dory.

Enter JOHN.

Have you taken the places in the London coach for me?

John. A hoy! your honour, is that yourself?

Sir Geo. No, I'm besides myself—where's my son?

John. What's o'clock?

Sir Geo. Why do you talk of clocks or time pieces?—all Glas's reckoning and log-line are run wild with me.

John. If it's two, your son is this moment walking with Lady Amaranth in her garden.

Sir Geo. With Lady Amaranth?

John. If half after, they've cast anchor to rest themselves among the posies; if three, they're got up again; if four, they're picking a bit of cram'd fowl; and if half after, they're picking their teeth, and cracking walnuts over a bottle of calcavella.

Sir Geo. My son!—my dear friend, where did you find him?

John.

John. I found him where he was, and I found him where he is.

Sir Geo. What! and he come to Lady Amaranth's?

John. No, I brought him there from this house, in her carriage—I won't tell him Mr Harry went among the players, or he'd never forgive him (*aside*)—
Oh, such a merry, civil, crazy, crack-brain'd—the very picture of your honour.

Sir Geo. What, he's in high spirits—ha, ha, ha—the dog—I hope he had discretion enough though to throw a little gravity over his mad humour, before his prudent cousin.

John. He threw himself upon his knees before her, and that did quite as well.

Sir Geo. Made love to her already!—ha, ha, ha,—oh the impudent, cunning villain!—what, and may be he—

John. Indeed he did give her a smack. Ah! he's a chip of the old block.

Sir Geo. Indeed—ha, ha, ha.

John. Oh, he threw his arms about her as eager as I would to catch a falling decanter of Madeira.

Sir Geo. Huzza, victoria!—here will be a juncture of two bouncing estates—but confound the money!—John, you shall have a bowl for a jolly boat to swim in. Roll in a puncheon of rum, a hoghead of fugar, shake an orchard of oranges, and let the landlord drain his fish-pond yonder—a bumper, a bumper, &c. (*sings*).

John. Then, my good Master, Sir George, I'll order a bowl, since you're in the humour for it. *[Exit.]*

Sir Geo. And so the wild rogue is this instant rattling up her prim Ladyship? Eh, isn't this he? Left her already!

Enter HARRY.

Har. I must have left my cane in this room.—
Eh, my father!

Sir Geo. (*Looking at his watch.*) Just half after four: why, Harry, you've made great haste in cracking your walnuts.

Har. Yes; he has heard of my frolics with the players. (*aside.*) Dear father, if you'll but forgive me—

Sir Geo. Why, indeed, you have acted very bad.

Har. Sir, it should be considered I was but a novice.

Sir Geo. However, I shall think of nothing now but your Benefit.

Har. Very odd his approving of—(*Aside.*) I thank you, Sir; but if it's agreeable to you, I have done with Benefits.

Sir Geo. If I was not the best of fathers, you might indeed hope none from me; but no matter if you can but get the Fair Quaker—

Har. Or the Humours of the Navy, Sir.

Sir Geo. What! How dare you reflect on the Humours of the Navy? The navy has very good humours, or I'd never see your dog's face again, you villain! But I'm cool.—Eh, boy, a snug easy chariot.

Har.

Har. I'll order it; desire my father's carriage to draw up.

Sir Geo. Mine, you rogue, I've none; I mean Lady Amaranth's.

Har. Yes, Sir, Lady Amaranth's chariot.

Sir Geo. What are you at? I mean that you left this house in.

Har. Sir, I left this house on foot.

Sir Geo. What, with John Dory?

Har. No, Sir; with Jack Rover.

Sir Geo. Why John has been a Rover to be sure; but now he is settled: I've made him my Valet de Chambre.

Har. Made him your Valet! Why, Sir, where did you meet with him?

Sir Geo. Zounds! I meet him abroad and meet him on shore—in the cabin and steerage—gallery and forecattle.—He sail'd round the world with me.

Har. Strange this: I understood he had been in the East Indies, but he never told me he knew you; but indeed, he only knew me by the name of Dick Buskin.

Sir Geo. Then how came he to bring you to Lady Amaranth's?

Har. Bring me where?

Sir Geo. Answer me; a'n't you now come from her Ladyship's?

Har. Not I.

Sir Geo. Ha, this is a lie of John's to enhance his own services. Then you have not been there?

Har.

Har. I don't know where you mean, Sir.

Sir Geo. Yes, it's all a brag of John's; but I'll—

Enter JOHN DORY.

John. The rum and fugar is ready; but as for the fish-pond—

Sir Geo. I'll kick you into it, you thirsty old grampus.

John. Will you? Then I'll make a comical roasted orange.

Sir Geo. How dare you say you brought my son to Lady Amaranth's?

John. And who says I didn't?

Sir Geo. He that best knows only, Dick Buskin here.

John. Then Mr Buskin mus'n't shoot off great guns for his amusement.

Sir Geo. And so you did bring my son to Lady Amaranth.

John. Why who say's I didn't?

Sir Geo. There, what do you say to that?

Har. I say 'tis false.

John. False!—shiver my hulk, Mr Buckskin, if you were a lyon's skin I'd curry your hide for this. [*Exit.*]

Sir Geo. No, no—John's honest—I see through it now—the puppy has seen her; perhaps he has the impudence not to like her—and so blow up this confusion and perplexity only to break off a marriage.

Har. What does he mean—I'll assure you——

Sir Geo. Damn your assurance, you ungrateful, disobedient—but I'll not part with you till I confront you with Lady Amaranth herself, face to face; and if

THE STROLLING GENTLEMEN. 51

I prove you have been deceiving me, I'll launch you into the wide ocean of life, without a rudder, compass, grog, or tobacco. [Exeunt.

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE.—LADY AMARANTH'S House.

Enter LADY AMARANTH, *reading*.

Lady A.

THE fanciful flights of my pleasant cousin enchants my senses; this book he gave me to read containeth good morals, the man Shakespear, that did write it, they call immortal: he must indeed have been filled with divine spirit. I understand, from my cousin, the origin of plays were religious mysteries; that, freed from the superstition of early, and grossness of later times, the stage is now become the vehicle of delight and morality; if so, to hear a good play is taking the wholesome draught of precept from a golden cup, emboss'd with gems, yet giving my countenance to have one in my house, and even to act in it myself, proves the ascendancy my dear Harry has over my heart. Ephraim Smooth is much scandalized at these doings.

Enter EPHRAIM SMOOTH.

Eph. This mansion is now become the tabernacle of Baal.

Lady A.

Lady A. Then abide not in it.

Eph. 'Tis full of the wicked ones.

Lady A. Stay not among the wicked ones.

Eph. I must shut my ears. (*loud laugh*)

Lady A. And thy mouth also, good Ephraim; I have bidden my cousin Harry to my house, and will not set bounds to his mirth, to gratify thy spleen, and shew my own inhospitality.

Eph. Why dost thou suffer him to put into the hands of thy servants books of tragedies, and books of comedies, preludes, and interludes—yea, all ludes; my spirit doth wax wroth. I say unto thee, a play-house is a school for the old dragon, and a play-book the primmer of Belzebub.

Lady A. This is one; mark. (*reads*) “Not the king’s crown, nor the deputed sword, the marshal’s truncheon, nor the judge’s robe, becometh them with one half so good a grace as mercy doth. Oh! think on that, and mercy then will breathe within your lives like men new made.” Doth Belzebub speak such words?

Eph. Thy kinsman hath made all thy servants actors.

Lady A. To act well is good service.

Eph. Here cometh the damsel, for whom my heart yearneth.

Enter JANE, reading.

Jane. Oh, Ma’am! his young honour, the ‘Squire, says the play’s to be As You Like It.

Eph. I like it not.

Jane.

Jane. He's given me my character; I am to be Miss Audrey, and brother Sim's to be William of the Forest, as it were; but how am I to get my part by heart?

Lady A. By often reading it.

Jane. Well, I don't know but that's as good as any other. I must study my part—the gods give us joy. *[Exit.]*

Eph. Thy maidens skip like young kids.

Lady A. Then, do thou go skip along with them.

Eph. Marry, thou should'st be obey'd in thine own house, and I will do thy bidding.

Lady A. Ah, thou hypocrite, to obey is easy, when the heart commands.

Enter ROVER.

Rov. Oh, my charming cousin, how agree you and Rosalind? Are you almost perfect? What, old Clytus, why you're like any angry fiend broke in amongst the laughing Gods; come, come, I'll have nothing here but quips, and cranks, and wreathed smiles.

Lady A. He says we must not have this amusement.

Rov. But I have a voice potential, double as the Duke's, and I say we must.

Eph. Nay.

Rov. Yea, by Jupiter I swear—Aye. *(fiddle without)*

Eph. The man of sin rubbeth the hair of the horse to the bowels of the cat.

Enter LAMP with a violin.

Lamp. Now, if agreeable to your Ladyship, we'll go over your song.

Lady A.

Lady A. I'm content.

[*Lamp begins to play, Ephraim pushes his elbow, which puts him out of tune—plays again—Ephraim jogs as before.*]

Lamp. What, Sir, do you mean?

Rov. Now do, my good friend, be quiet.—Come, begin.

Eph. Friend, this is a land of liberty, and I've as much right to move my elbows, as thou hast thine. (*Rover pushes him*) Why dost thou do so, friend.

Rov. Friend, this is a land of liberty, and I have as much right to move my elbows as thou hast to move thine. (*pushes him off.*) A fanatical puppy.

Lady A. But, Harry, do you people of fashion act in these follies yourselves?

Rov. Aye, and scramble for the top parts as eager as for stars, ribbands, place, or pension. *Lamp* decorate the seats out smart and theatrical, and drill the servants that I have given the small parts. [*Exit Lamp.*]

Lady A. I wish'd for some entertainment, in which people now take delight, to please those I have invited, but will convert those follies into a charitable purpose: Tickets of this play shall be delivered to my friends gratis, but money to their amount I will, from my own purse (after rewarding the assistants) distribute among the indigent of the village; thus, while we amuse our friends, and perhaps please ourselves, we shall make the poor happy.

[*Exit.*]

Rov.

Rov. An angel!—If Sir George doesn't soon arrive to blow me, I may, I think, marry her angelic Ladyship—but will that be honest?—she's nobly born—though I suspect I had ancestors too, if I knew who they were.—I entered this house the poorest wight in England, and what must she imagine when I'm discovered?—that I'm a scoundrel; and consequently, tho' I should possess her hand and fortune, instead of loving, she'll despise me. (*sits*) I want a friend now to consult—deceive her I will not—poor Dick Buskin wants money more than myself, yet this is a measure I'm sure he'd scorn—no, no, I must not.

Enter HARRY.

Har. Now, I hope my passionate father will be convinced that this is the first time I was ever under this roof. What beau is here?—astonishing! my old strolling friend. (*sits down unperceived.*)

Rov. I don't know what to do.

Har. Nor what to say.

Rov. Dick Buskin, ha, ha, ha,—my dear fellow—think of the devil, and—I was just thinking of you—'pon my soul, Dick, I am happy to see you.

Har. But, Jack, how the devil have you found me out?

Rov. Found you, I'm sure I wonder how the deuce you found me out—oh, the news of my intended play has brought you.

Har. He does not as yet know who I am, so I'll carry it on. (*aside*). Then you have broke your en-

gagement with Truncheon, at Winchester?—figuring away in your stage cloaths too, really.—Tell me what you are at here, Jack?

Rov. Will you be quiet with your Jacking, I'm now 'Squire Harry.

Har. What!

Rov. I've been pres'd into this service by an old man of war, who found me at the inn, and insisted I'm son to Sir George Thunder. In that character, I flatter myself, I have won the heart of the charming lady of this house.

Har. Now the mystery is out—(*aside*)—then it's my friend Jack has been brought here for me.—Do you know the young gentleman they take you for?

Rov. Not I; but I flatter myself he is honoured in his representative.

Har. Upon my soul, Jack, you're a tight fellow.

Rov. Now I can put some pounds in your pocket—you shall be employed—we're getting up *As You Like It*—let's see in the cast, have I part for you—egad, I'll take Touchstone from Lamp, you shall have it, my boy—I'd resign Orlando to you, with any other Rosalind, but the lady of the mansion plays it herself.

Har. The very lady my father intended for me. (*aside*) Do you love her, Jack?

Rov. To distraction—but I'll not have her.

Har. No—why?

Rov. She thinks me a gentleman, and I'll not convince her I'm a rascal; I'll go on with our play, as the
produce

produce is appropriated to a good purpose, then lay down my 'Squireship, bid adieu to my heavenly Rosalind, and exit for ever from her house, poor Jack Rover.

Har. The generous fellow I ever thought him, and he shan't lose by it—if I could make him believe (*aside*)—Well, this is the most whimsical affair—you've anticipated me—you'll scarce believe that I'm come here purposely to pass myself for this young Harry.

Rov. No.

Har. I am.

Sir Geo. (*without*) Harry, where are you.

Rov. Who's that?

Har. I'll try it—my father will be curfedly vext—no matter. (*aside*)

Rov. Somebody called Harry—zounds, if the real Simon Pure, that is, should be arrived, I'm in a pure way.

Har. Be quiet, that's my confederate, he's to personate the father, Sir George, he started the scheme—having heard an union was intended, and Sir George immediately expected, our plan is, if I can, before his arrival, flourish myself into the lady's good graces, and whip her up, as she's an heiress.

Rov. So, you have turn'd fortune hunter. Then 'twas for this plan you parted from me on the road, standing like a figure-post, you walk up this way, and I'll walk down this—why, Dick, I did not know you was so great a rogue.

Har. I did not know my fort lay that way, till convince'd by this experienced stranger.

Rev. He must be a damn'd impudent old scoundrel—who is he, do I know him?

Har. Why, no, I hope not (*aside*)

Rev. I'll step down stairs, and have the honour of kicking him.

Har. Stop, I wou'dn't have him hurt, neither.

Rev. What's his name?

Har. His name is Abrawang.

Rev. Abrawang, Abrawang.—I never heard of him—but, Dick, why did you let him persuade you into this affair?

Har. Why, faith, I would have been off it, but when once he takes a project into his head, the devil can't drive it out of him.

Rev. Yes, but the constables may drive him into Winchester goal.

Har. Your opinion of our intended exploit has made me ashamed of myself—Harkee, Jack, do you punish and frighten my adviser, do you still keep up your character of young 'Squire Thunder—you can easily do that, as he, no more than myself, has ever seen the 'Squire.

Rev. But, by heavens, I'll not be such a damn'd rogue.

Har. Yes, but Jack, if you can marry her, her fortune is a snug thing; besides, if you love each other, I tell you——

Rev.

Rov. Hang her fortune—my love more noble than the world, prizes not quantity of dirty lands—oh, Dick, she's the most lovely—think of her condescension—why she consented to play in our play, and you shall see her, you rogue, you shall.

Her worth being mounted on the wind,

Through all the world bears Rosalind. [*Exit.*]

Har. Ha, ha, ha, this is the drollest adventure—Rover little suspects that I am the identical 'Squire Thunder that he personates—I'll lend him my character a little longer—yes, this offer is a most excellent opportunity of making my poor friend's fortune, without injuring any body. If possible, he shall have her, I can't regret the loss of charms I never knew, and for an estate, my father is competent to all my wishes. Lady Amaranth, by marrying Jack Rover, will gain a man of honour, which she might lose in an Earl—it may tease my father a little at first, but he's a good old fellow in the main, and when, I think, he comes to know my motive!—Eh, this must be she—an elegant woman, faith—now for a spanking lie, to continue her in the belief that Jack is the man she thinks him.

Enter LADY AMARANTH.

Lady A. Who art thou, friend?

Har. Madam, I've scarce time to warn you against the danger you're in, of being imposed upon by your uncle, Sir George.

Lady A. How!

Har. He has heard of your Ladyship's partiality for his son, but is so incensed at the irregularity of his conduct, he intends, if possible, to disinheret him, and to present me hither, to pass me on you for him, designing to treat the poor young gentleman himself as an impostor, in hopes you'll banish him from your heart and house.

Lady A. I thank thee, friend, for thy caution—is Sir George such a parent—what's thy name?

Har. Richard Buskin, Ma'am, the stage is my profession—in the 'Squire's late excursion we contracted an intimacy, and I saw so many good qualities in him, that I could not think of being the instrument of his ruin, nor deprive your Ladyship of so good a husband as I am certain he will make you.

Lady A. Then Sir George intends to disown him.

Har. Yes Ma'am, I've this moment told the young gentleman of it; he's determined, for a jest, to return the compliment, by seeming to treat Sir George himself as an impostor.

Lady A. Ha, ha, ha, 'twill be a just retaliation, and indeed what my uncle deserveth, for his cruel intentions both to his son and me.

Sir Geo. (without) What, has he run away again?

Lady A. That's my uncle.

Har. Yes here's my father, and my standing out that I'm not his son, will raise him into the heat of a battle, ha, ha, ha. (*aside*) Here he is, Madam, now mind how he'll dub me a 'Squire.

Enter

Enter SIR GEORGE.

Sir Geo. Well, my Lady, was'n't it as my wild rogue set you, all in these calcavell capers, you've been cutting in the garden. You see here I have brought him into line of battle again—you villain, why do you drop a stern there, throw a salute shot, bufs her bob-stays, bring to, and come down straight as a mast, you dog

Lady A. Uncle, who is this?

Sir Geo. Who is he—egad, that's an odd question, to the fellow that has been cracking your walnuts.

Lady A. He's bad at his lesson.

Sir Geo. Certainly, when he ran from school—why don't you speak, you lubber, you are curfed modest—before I came, 'twas all down among the posies; here, my Lady, take from a father's hand, Harry Thunder.

Lady A. That is what I may not.

Sir Geo. There, I thought you would disgust her, you flat fish.

Enter ROVER.

Lady A. (*Takes Rover's hand.*) Here, take from my hand Harry Thunder.

Sir Geo. Eh!

Rov. Oh, this is your sham Sir George,—(*Apart to Harry.*)

Har. Yes, I've been telling the Lady, and still seem to humour him.

Rov. I shan't; though how do you Abrawang?

Sir Geo. Abrawang!

Rov.

Rov. You look like a good actor; aye, that's very well indeed. Never, never lose sight of your character; you know Sir George is a noisy, turbulent, wicked old knave; bravo! Pout your under lip, purse your brows:—Very well; but damn it, Abrawang, you should have put a little red on your nose—mind a rule, never play an angry man without a red nose.

Sir Geo. I'm in such a fury.

Rov. Well we know that.

Lady A. Who is this?

Sir Geo. Some puppy unknown.

Lady A. And you don't know this gentleman?

Rov. Excellent well! he's a fishmonger.

Sir Geo. Ah, What!

Lady A. Yes; father and son are determin'd not to know each other.

Rov. Come, Dick, give the Lady a specimen of your talent Motleys, your only wear, ha, ha, ha, a fool I met, a fool in the forest. Here comes Audrey.

Enter JANE.

Har. Come, trip, trip, Audrey, I'll fetch up your Goats.

Jane. La! warrant, what features!

Sir Geo. 'Sblood! what's this?

Har. A homely thing, Sir, but she's my own.

Sir Geo. Your's, you most audacious!—What, this slut?

Jane. I thank the Gods for my sluttishness.

Lady A. (To Rover.) You know this youth.

Rov.

Row. My friend, Horatio; I wear him in my heart yea, in my heart of hearts, as I do this—(*kisses her.*)

Sir Geo. Such freedom with my niece, before my face. Do you know that Lady? Do you know my son, Sir?

Row. Be quiet; Jaffier has discovered the plot, and you can't deceive the senate.

Har. Yes, my conscience would not let me carry it through.

Row. Aye, his conscience hanging about the neck of his heart, says good Launcelot and good Gobbo, or as aforesaid good Launcelot Gobbo, take to thy heels and run away.

Sir Geo. Why, my Lady, explain—scoundrel and puppy unknown.

Jane. Ma'am, I forgot to tell you, our old neighbour Banks and his sister wants you.

Lady A. I come. Uncle, I've heard thy father was kind to thee; return that kindness to thy child—if the lamb in wanton play doth fall amongst the waters, the shepherd taketh him out, instead of plunging him in deeper till he dieth—though thy hairs now be grey, I'm told they were once flaxen; in short, he's too old in folly, who cannot excuse youth. [*Exit.*]

Sir Geo. I'm an old fool! well, that's damn'd civil of you, Madam Niece; and I'm a grey shepherd, with his lambs in the ditch—but as for you, Mr Goat, I'll——

Row.

Row. My dear Abrawang, give up the game; her Ladyship in seeming to take you for her uncle, has been only humming you—What the devil, don't you think the divine creature knows her own true-born uncle?

Sir Geo. Certainly, to be sure she knows me.

Row. Will you have done?—Zounds, man, my honoured father was here himself this day—her ladyship knows his person.

Sir Geo. Your honoured father, and who the devil's your honour'd self?

Row. Now, by my father's son, that's myself, it shall be sun, or moon, or Cheshire-cheese—I budge still cros'd and cros'd!

Sir Geo. What do you bawl out to me about Cheshire-cheese for?

Row. And I say, as the saying is, your friend has told me all; but to convince you of my forgiveness, in our play, as you're rough and tough, I cast your character the wrestler—I'll do Orlando, kick up your heels before the whole court.

Sir Geo. I'll—why, dam'me, I'll—and you, you undutiful chick of an old pelican (*lifts up his cane*).

Enter JOHN DORY.

John. What are you at here, cudgelling people about?—But, Mr Buckskin, I've a word to say to you in private.

Sir Geo. Buckskin, take that (*strikes him*).

Row.

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Rov. Why, dam'me, Mr Abrawang, you're a most obstinate Dromedary——

Enter LAMP and TRAP.

Lamp. All the world's a stage, and all men and women——

Sir Geo. The men are rogues, and the women huffies. (*Beats them off, and strikes Rover.*)

[*Exit all but Rover.*]

Rov. A blow, Effex, a blow, an old rascally impostor; stigmatize me with a blow—I must not put up with it.——Zounds! I shall be tweak'd by the nose all round the country. If I can get the country lad to steal me a pair of pistols, strike me, so may this arm dash him to the earth like a dead dog, despise, pride, shame, and the name of villain light on me, if I don't bring you down Mr Abrawang. [*Exit.*]

SCENE.—*Changes to another room.*

Enter LADY AMARANTH and BANKS.

Banks. Madam, I would have paid the rent of my little cottage; but I dare say it was without your Ladyship's consent that your Steward has turned me out and put my neighbour in possession.

Lady A. My Steward oppresses the poor! I did not know it indeed.

Banks. The pangs of adversity I could bear; but the innocent partner of my misfortunes, my unhappy sister——

Lady

Lady A. I did desire Ephraim to send for thy sister; did she dwell with thee, and both now without a home? let her come to mine.

Banks. The hand of misery hath struck me beneath your notice.

Lady A. Thou dost mistake; to need my assistance is the highest claim to my attention——let me see her. (*Exit Banks*) I could chide myself that these pastimes have turned mine eyes from the house of woe. Ah, think ye proud and happy affluent, how many in your dancing moments pine in want, drink the salt tears—their morsel the bread of misery, and shrinking from the cold blast into their cheerless hovels!

Enter BANKS introducing AMELIA.

Banks. Madam, here is my sister. [*Exit.*

Lady A. Thou art welcome: I feel myself interested in thy concern.

Am. Madam——

Lady A. I judge thou wert not always unhappy, tell me thy condition then, I shall better know how to serve thee; is thy brother thy sole kindred?

Am. I had a husband and a son.

Lady A. Widow, if I don't recal images, thou wouldest forget—impart to me thy story, 'tis rumour'd in the village thy brother was a clergyman, tell me.

Am. Madam, he was; but he has lost his early patron, and he's now poor and unbeneficed.

Lady A. But thy husband.

Am.

Am. By this brother's advice (now twenty years since) I was prevailed on to listen to the addresses of a young sea officer, for my brother had been chaplain in the navy; but, to our surprize and mortification, we discovered, by the honesty of a sailor, in whom we put confidence, that the Captain's design was only to decoy me into a seeming marriage; our humble friend intreated of us to put the deceit on his master, by concealing from him that my brother was in orders; he, flattered with the hopes of procuring me an establishment, gave into the supposed imposition, and performed the ceremony.

Lady A. Duplicity, even with a good intent, is ill.

Am. Madam, the event has justified your censure, for my husband, not knowing himself really bound by any legal tie, abandoned me—I followed him to the Indies; distracted, till seeing him, I left my infant at one of our settlements; but, after a fruitless search, on my return, I found the friend, to whose care I committed my child, was compelled to retire from the ravages of war, but where I could not hear—rent with agonizing pangs, without a child or husband, I again saw England, and my brother, wounded with remorse for being the cause of my misfortunes, secluded himself from all joys of social life, and invited me to partake the comforts of solitude in that asylum, from whence we have both just now been driven.

Lady A. My pity can do thee no good, yet must I pity thee; but resignation to what must be, may restore

G

peace;

peace; if my means can procure thee comfort, they are at thy pleasure—come let thy griefs subside—instea*d* of thy cottage, accept thou and thy brother every convenience that my mansion can afford.

Am. Madam, I can only thank you with—(*weeps*).

Lady A. My thanks are here—come thou shalt be chearful—I will introduce thee to my sprightly cousin Harry, and his father, my humorous uncle—we have delights going forward that may amuse thee.

Am. Kind Lady.

Lady A. Come, smile, though a quaker, thou see'st I'm merry—the sweetest joy of wealth and power is to cheer one another's drooping heart, and wipe from the pallid cheek the tear of sorrow.

END OF ACT FOURTH.

ACT V.

SCENE.—*A Road.*

Enter three men dressed as Sailors.

1st Sailor.

WELL, lads, what's to be done?

2d Sail. We've long been upon our shifts, and after all our tricks, twists, and turns, as London was too hot for us, a trip to Portsmouth was a hit.

1st Sail. Aye, but since the cash we touched upon pretending to be able bodied seamen is now come to

the

the last shilling, and as we deserted, means of fresh supply must be thought on to take us to London.

2d *Sail*. Aye, now to recruit the pocket, without hazarding the neck.

1st *Sail*. By an advertisement posted on the stocks yonder, there are collectors on this road, thirty guineas offered by the quaker lady, owner of the estates round here—I wish we could knap any straggler to bring before her, a quaker will only require yea for an oath, we might pick up this thirty guineas.

2d *Sail*. Yes, but we must take care, if we fall into the hands of this gentleman that's in pursuit of us—'Sdeath, is not this his man, the old boatswain?

1st *Sail*. Don't run, I think we three are a match for him.

2d *Sail*. Let's keep up our characters of sailors, we may get something out of him; a pityful story makes such an impression on the soft heart of a true tar, that he'll open his hard hand and drop you his last guinea—if we can but make him believe we were pressed, we have him, only mind me.

Enter JOHN DORY.

John. To rattle my lanthorn, Sir George's temper now always blows a hurricane.

2d *Sail*. What cheer?

John. Ha, boy.

1st *Sail*. Bob up with your speaking trumpet.

2nd *Sail*. D'ye see, brother, this is the thing—

Enter SIR GEORGE behind, unseen.

We three hands, just come home after a long voyage, were pressed in the river, and without letting us see our friends brought round to Portsmouth, and then we entered freely—'cause why, we had no choice—then we run—we hear some gentleman's in chace of us, and as the shots are all out, we'll surrender.

John. Surrender—then you have no shots left, indeed—let's see (*feeling his pocket*) I hav'n't the loading of a gun about me now, and this same Monsieur Poverty is a bitter enemy.

Sir Geo. (aside) 'Tis the deserters I'm after.

John. Meet me in an hour's time in the little wood yonder, I'll raise the wind to blow you into a safe latitude—Keep out to sea, my master's the rock you'll certainly split upon.

2d Sail. This is the first time we ever saw you, but we'll steer by your chart, for I never knew one seaman betray another. [*Exeunt Men.*]

Sir Geo. Then they have been pressed—I can't blame them so much for running away.

John. Yes, Sir George would certainly hang them.

Sir Geo. You lie; they shall eat beef and drink the King's health—run and tell them so—stop, I'll tell them myself.

John. Now you are yourself, and a kind gentleman, as you used to be.

Sir Geo. Since these idle rogues are inclined to return to their duty, they shan't want sea stores; take
this

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this money—but I'll meet them myself, and advise them as I would my own children. *[Exeunt]*

SCENE.—*A Wood.*

Enter ROVER, with pistols.

Rov. Which way did this Mr Abrawang take?—Dick Buskin, I think, has no suspicion of my intention, and since Sim has, without making an alarm, procured these pistols, such a choleric spark will fight I dare say. If I fall, or even survive this affair, I'll leave the field of love and the fair prize to the young gentleman I've personated, for I'm determined to see Lady Amaranth no more—Oh, here comes Abrawang.

Enter SIR GEORGE.

Sir Geo. Now to relieve these sea gulls—they must be hovering about this place—Ha, puppy unknown.

Rov. You're the very man I was seeking for—you're not ignorant, Mr Abrawang?

Sir Geo. Mr What?

Rov. You'll not resign your title—oh, very well, I'll indulge you—Sir George Thunder, you honoured me with a blow.

Sir Geo. Didn't hurt you.

Rov. 'Sdeath, Sir, but let me proceed like a gentleman; as it's my pride to reject even favours, no man shall offer me an injury.

Sir Geo. Eh!

Rov. In rank we're equal.

Sir Geo. Are we, faith—the English of all this is, we're to fight.

Rov. Sir, you have marked in me an indelible stain, only to be wash'd out by my blood.

Sir Geo. Why, I've only one objection to fighting you.

Rov. What's that, Sir?

Sir Geo. That you're too brave a lad to be kill'd.

Rov. Brave, no, Sir, at present I wear the stigma of a coward.

Sir Geo. Zounds, I like a bit of fighting—hav'n't had a morsel a long time—don't know when I smelt gunpowder, but to bring down a woodcock.

Rov. Take your ground.

Sir Geo. I'm ready—but are we to thrust with bull-rushes, like two frogs, or like two squirrels, pelt one another with nut-shells, for I don't see any other weapons here.

Rov. Oh, yes, Sir, here are the weapons.

Sir Geo. Well, this is bold work for a privateer to give battle to a King's ship.

Rov. Try your charge, Sir, and take your ground.

Sir Geo. I wou'dn't wish to sink, burn, or destroy what I thought was built for good service, but dam'me if I don't bring wing to you, to teach you better manners, so take care, or I'll put some red on your nose.

Enter three men without seeing Rover.

1st Sail. Ah, here's the honest fellow has brought us some cash.

2nd

and *Sail*. We're betray'd, it's the very gentleman that's in pursuit of us, and this promise was only a decoy to throw us into his power—the pistol! (*aside*)

Sir Geo. Good charge (*trying the charge, the men rush forward, and one of them smacks the pistol from him.*) Ha, boys.

and *Sail*. You'd have our lives, and we'll yours. (*Rover runs to his assistance, and knocks the pistol out of his hand—they run off.*)

Rov. Rascals! (*pursues them.*)

Sir Geo. (*takes up the pistol.*) My brave lad, I'll—(*going.*)

Enter JOHN DORY.

John. No, you shan't. (*stops him.*)

Sir Geo. The rogues will——

John. Never mind the rogues. (*a pistol fired without.*)

Sir Geo. S'blood, must I see my preserver perish? (*struggling.*)

John. I'm your preserver, and I will perish, but I'll bring you out of harm's way.

Sir Geo. Though he'd fight me myself——

John. We all know you'd fight the very devil.

Sir Geo. He sav'd my life.

John. I'll save your life—(*whips him up*)—hawl up, my noble little jolly-boat. [*Exit, carrying Sir Geo. off.*]

SCENE.—BANK'S House.

Enter GAMMON, BANKS, and SIM.

Gam. Boy, go on with the inventory.

Sim.

Sim. How unlucky, feyther, to lay hold on me, when I wanted to practise my part.

Banks. This proceeding is too severe—to lay an execution on my wretched trifling goods, when I thought——

Gam. Aye, you've gone up to the big house with your complaint—her Ladyship's steward, to be sure, has made me give back your cottage and farm, but your goods I seized for my rent.

Banks. Leave me but a few necessaries; by my own labour, and the goodness of my neighbours, I may soon redeem what the law has put in your hands.

Gam. The affair is now in my lawyer's hands, and plaintiff and defendant chattering about it is all smoke.

Sim. Feyther, don't be so cruel to Mr Banks.

Gam. I'll mark what I may want for myself—stay you and see that not a pin's point be removed. [*Exit.*]

Sim. (*tearing the paper.*) Dam'me, If I'll be a watch dog to bite the poor, that I won't. Mr Banks, as my feyther intends to put up your goods to auction, if you could but get a friend to buy the choice of them for you again; sister Jane has got steward to advance her a quarter's wages, and when I've gone to sell corn for feyther, I've made a market penny now and then—it isn't much, but every little helps. (*offers a purse.*)

Banks. I thank you, my good natured boy, but keep your money.

Sim.

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Sim. I remember, about eight years ago, you sav'd me from being drown'd at Black Poole—if you'll not take this, I'll fling it into Black Poole directly.

Banks. My kind lad, I'll not hurt your feelings, by opposing your liberality. (*takes the purse.*)

Sim. He, he, he!—He's given my heart such pleasure, as I never felt, nor I'm sure my feyther before me.

Banks. But, *Sim*, whatever may be his opinion of worldly prudence, still remember he's your parent.

[*Exit.*

Sim. I will—One elbow chair, one claw table, (*crying out.*)

[*Exit.*

Enter AMELIA.

Am. The confusion into which Lady Amaranth's family is thrown, by the sudden departure and apprehended danger of her young cousin, must have prevented her Ladyship from giving that attention to our affairs that I'm sure was her inclination—If I can but prevail on my brother to accept of her protection—Heavens, what's this?

Enter ROVER, fatigued and disordered.

Rov. (*panting, as out of breath.*) What a race—I've got clear of those blood-hounds at last; if Abrawang had but followed and back'd me, we'd have tickled their catastroph, but three to one is odds, so safe's the word. Who's house is this I've run into—the friendly cottage of my hospitable old gentleman—are you at home? (*calls*) I had a hard struggle for it,
murder

murder was certainly their intent—it was well for me I was born without brains—I'm quite weak and faint.

Am. (comes forward) Sir, a'n't you well?

Rov. Madam, I ask your pardon—Yes, Madam, very well, I thank you, now exceedingly well—got into a kind of rumpus with some worthy gentlemen—not gentlemen, but simple farmers, who mistook me, I fancy, for a sheaf of barley, for they had me down, and their flails flew merrily about my ears, but I got up, and when I could no longer fight like a mastiff, I run like a grey-hound—but, dear Madam, pray excuse me—this is very rude, faith.

Am. You seem disturb'd, will you take any refreshment?

Rov. Madam, you're very good—only a glass of some current wine, if you please; I think it stands somewhere thereabouts. (*Amelia fetches a bottle and glasses.*) Madam, I've the honour of drinking your health.

Am. I hope you're not hurt, Sir.

Rov. A little better, but very faint still, I had a sample of this before, and lik'd it so much that—Ma'am won't you take another? (*she declines*) Ma'am if you'd been fighting as I have, you'd be glad of a drop. (*drinks again*) Now I'm as well as any man in Illyria—got a few hard knocks though.

Am. You'd better repose a little, you seem'd much disordered coming in.

Rov. Why Madam, you must know, that it was.—

Enter

THE STROLLING GENTLEMEN.

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Enter SHERIFF'S OFFICER.

(Catches Amelia's chair, she retires alarmed)

Off. Come Ma'am, Mr Gammon wants this chair to make up the half dozen above.

Rov. What's all this?

Off. Why, the furniture's seiz'd on execution, and a man must do his duty.

Rov. Then scoundrel know, that a man's first duty is civility and tenderness to a woman. *(takes chair from Officer and throws it back.)*

Am. Heavens where's my brother, this gentleman will bring himself into trouble.

Off. Master, d'ye see, I'm representative for his honour the High Sheriff.

Rov. Every High Sheriff should be a gentleman, and when he's represented by a rascal he's dishonoured; damn it, I might as well live about Covent Garden and every night get beating the watch, for here among groves and meadows, I'm always squabbling with constables.

Off. Come, come, I must—*(again lays hold of chair.)*

Rov. As you say Sir, last Wednesday, so it was, Sir, your most obedient humble servant, *(takes chair a second time from him.)* Pray Sir have you ever been astonished?

Off. What?

Rov. Because, Sir, I intend to astonish you, *(takes his cane off table and beats him.)* Now Sir, are you astonished?

Off.

Off. Yes, but see if I don't suit you with an action.

Row. Right——suit the action to the word and the word to the action. See if the gentleman be not affrighted, dam'me, but I'll make thee an example.

Off. A fine example when goods are seized by the law.

Row. Thou worm and maggot of the law, hop me over every kennel house, or you shall hop without my custom.

Off. I don't value your custom.

Row. I have astonish'd, now I'll amaze you.

Off. No Sir, I won't be amazed, but see if I don't.

Row. Hop. (*Beats Officer off, threatening*) Madam, these sort of gentry are but bad company for a lady, so I'll just see him to the door—Ma'am I'm your most humble servant. [*Exit.*]

Am. I feel a strange kind of curiosity to know who this young gentleman is. I find my heart interested, I can't account for it; he must know the house by the freedom he took: but then his gaiety, (without familiar rudeness) elegance of manners and good breeding, seem to make him at home every where—my brother I think must know him.

Enter BANKS.

Banks. Amelia, did you see the young gentleman that was here, some ruffians have bound and dragg'd him from the door on the allegation of three men who mean to swear he has robbed them, and have taken him to Lady Amaranth's.

Am.

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Am. How! he did enter in confusion as if pursued, but I'll stake my life on his innocence. I'll speak to her Ladyship, and in spite of calumny he shall have justice; he wou'dn't let me be insulted, because he saw me an unprotected woman, without a husband or a son, and shall he want an advocate, brother? come—[*Exit.*

SCENE.—LADY AMARANTH'S.

Enter JANE.

Jane. I believe there is no foul in the house but myself, my Lady has all the folks round the country, to search after the young 'Squire; she'll certainly break her heart if any thing happens to him. I don't wonder, for sure he's a dear sweet gentleman. His going has spoiled our play, and I had almost got my part by heart, but I must, must go and do up the room for Mr Banks's sister, whom my Lady has invited here—

Enter EPHRAIM.

Eph. The man John Dory hath carried the man George here in his arms and he locked him up; coming in they did look like a blue lobster with a shrimp in its claw. Here is the damsel I love alone.

Jane. They say when folks look in the glass, they see the black gentleman. (*Looks in a glass*) La, there he is.

Eph. Thou art employed in vanity. (*Looks over her shoulder.*)

Jane. Well, who are you?

Eph. It's natural for woman to love man.

H

Jane.

Jane. Yea, but not such ugly men as you are, why did you come to frighten me? when you know there's nobody here but ourselves?

Eph. I'm glad of that; I'm the elm, and thou'rt the honey-suckle, let thine arms entwine me.

Jane. What a rogue is here, but yonder comes my Lady. I'll shew him off in his true colours. (*Afide.*)

Eph. Clasp me round.

Jane. I will if you will pull off your hat and make me a low bow.

Eph. I cannot bend my knee, nor take off my beaver.

Jane. Then you're very impudent, go along.

Eph. To win thy favour, (*moves his hat.*)

Jane. Well now read me a speech out of that fine play book.

Eph. Read a play book! abo-mi-na-tion! but wilt thou kiss me?

Jane. I kiss a man, abomination, but you may take my hand.

Eph. Oh, 'tis comfort to the lip of the faithful. (*Kisses her hand.*)

Enter LADY AMARANTH.

Lady A. How! (*taps him on the shoulder.*) Ah, thou fly and deceitful hypocrite!

Eph. Verily Mary I was buffeted by Satan in the shape of a damsel.

Lady A. Begone.

Eph. My spirit is sad though I move so nimbly.

[*Exit slowly.*

Lady

THE STROLLING GENTLEMEN. 81

Lady A. But oh, heav'ns no tidings of my dearest Harry. Jane let them renew their search.

Jane. Here's Madam Amelia—but I'll make brother Sim look for the young 'Squire. [Exit.]

Enter AMELIA.

Am. Oh, Madam, might I implore your influence with——

Lady A. Thou art ill accommodated here, but I hope thou wilt excuse it, my mind is a sea of trouble, my peace is shipwrecked. Oh, hadst thou seen my Cousin Harry! all who know him must be anxious for his safety! how unlucky, this servant to prevent Sir George from giving him that assistance, which paternal care and indeed gratitude demanded, for 'twas filial affection led him to pursue those wicked men, callous to every feeling of humanity—they may—yes, my Henry in the opening bud of manliness is nipp'd!

John. Heave a-head. (*John without.*)

Enter JOHN with SIR GEORGE.

Sir Geo. Rascal, whip me up like a pound of tea, dance about like a young bear! make me quit the preserver of my life, yes, puppy unknown will think me a paltroon, and that I was afraid to follow and second him.

John. You may as well turn into your hammock, for out to night you shall not go. (*See's Amelia*) Mercy of heaven isn't it—only look.

Sir Geo. 'Tis my Amelia.

John. Reef your foresail first, you crack'd her heart by sheering off, and now you'll overfet her by bringing too.

Am. Are you at length return'd to me, my Seymour?

Lady A. Seymour!—her mind's disturbed—this is mine uncle, Sir George Thunder.

John. No, no, my Lady, she knows what she's saying, well enough.

Sir Geo. Niece, I have been a villain to this lady, I confess, but my dear Amelia, providence has done you justice in part, for from the first month I quitted you, I have never entered one happy hour on my journals—hearing that you foundered, and considering myself the cause, the worm of remorse has gnaw'd my timbers.

Am. You're not still offended with me.

Sir Geo. Me—can you forgive me my offence, and condescend to take my hand as an atonement?

Am. Your hand—do you forget we're already married?

Sir Geo. Aye, there was my rascality.

John. You may say that.

Sir Geo. That marriage, my dear, I'm ashamed to own it—but it was——

John. As good as if done by the Chaplain of the Eagle.

Sir Geo. Hold your tongue, you impudent crimp, you pander, you bad adviser—I'll strike my false colours, I'll acknowledge the chaplain you provided was——

John.

John. A good man, and a greater honour to his black, than your honour has been to your blue cloth; by the word of a seaman, here he is himself.

Enter BANKS.

Sir Geo. Your brother!

Banks. Capt. Seymour! have I found you, Sir.

Sir Geo. My dear Banks, I'll make every reparation—Amelia shall really be my wife.

Banks. That, Sir, my sister is already, for when I performed the marriage ceremony, which you took only as a cloak of your deception, I was actually in orders.

John. Now who's the crimp and the pander?—I never told you this, because I thought a man's own reflections were the best punishment for betraying an innocent woman.

Sir Geo. (to John.) You shall be a Post Captain for this, sink me, if you shan't.

Lady A. Madam, my inmost soul partaketh of thy gladness and joy for thy reformation; (*to Sir Geo.*) but thy prior marriage to this lady annuls the subsequent, and my cousin Harry is not now thy heir.

Sir Geo. So much the better, he's an unnatural cub—but, Amelia, I flatter myself I have an heir—my infant boy.

Am. Ha, husband, you had, but——

Sir Geo. Gone—well, well, I see I have been a miserable scoundrel—I'll adopt that brave kind lad, that wou'dn't let any body kill me but himself, he shall have

my estate, that's my own acquisition—my lady marrying him—Puppy Unknown's a fine fellow! Amelia, only for him, you'd never have found your husband—Captain Seymour in Sir George Thunder.

Am. How!

Banks. Are you Sir George Thunder?

Enter LANDLORD and EPHRAIM.

Land. Please you, madam, they have got a footpad in custody.

Eph. I'm come to sit in judgment, for there is a bad man in thy house, Mary—bring him before me.

Sir Geo. Before you, old Squintabus; perhaps you don't know I'm a magistrate.

Eph. I'll examine him.

Sir Geo. You be damn'd, I'll examine him myself—tow him in here, I'll give him a passport to Winchester bilbow.

Am. (kneels to Sir Geo.) Oh, Sir, as you hope for mercy, extend it to this youth, and even should he be guilty, which from our knowledge of his benevolent and noble nature, I think next to an impossibility, let the services he has rendered us plead for him—he protected your forsaken wife, and her unhappy brother, in the hour of want and sorrow.

Sir Geo. What, Amelia plead for a robber!—consider, my love, Justice is above bias or partiality; if my son violated the laws of his country, I'd deliver him up as a public victim to disgrace and punishment.

Lady

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Lady A. Oh, my impartial uncle! Had thy country any laws to punish him, who instead of paltry gold, would rob the artless virgin of her dearest treasure, in the rigid judge I should now behold the trembling criminal.

Enter TWITCH, with two men, and ROVER bound.

Eph. Speak thou.

Sir Geo. Hold thy clapper, thou—you wretched person, who are the prosecutors.

Eph. Call in.

Sir Geo. Will nobody stop his mouth (*John carries him up the stage.*) Where are the prosecutors?

Twitch. There, tell his worship the justice.

1st Man. A justice—oh, the devil!—I thought we should have nothing but quakers to deal with. (*aside*)

Sir Geo. Come, how did this fellow rob you?

1st Man. Why, your honour, I swear——

Sir Geo. Oh, ho!

1st Man. Zounds, we're in the wrong, this is the very——

Sir Geo. Clap down the hatches, secure these sharks.

Rov. I'm glad to find you here, Abrawang, as I believe you have some knowledge of these gentlemen.

Lady A. Heavens, my Cousin Harry!

Sir Geo. The Devil! isn't that my spear and shield?

John. My young master, what have you been at here. (*unbinds him*) This rope may be wanted yet.

Enter HARRY.

Har. My dear fellow are you safe?

Rov.

Rev. Yes, Dick, I was brought here very safe, I assure you.

Har. A confederate in custody has made a confession of their villainy, that they concerted this plan to accuse him of a robbery, first for revenge, then in hopes to share the reward for apprehending him; he also owns they are not sailors but depredators on the public.

Sir Geo. What, could you find no jacket to disgrace by your wearing than that of an English seaman, a character, whose bravery is even the admiration of his enemies, and genuine honesty of heart, the glory of human nature? Keep them safe.

John. Aye, I knew the rope would be wanted, *(drives 'em off.)*

Sir Geo. Not knowing that the Justice of Peace whom they brought the lad before, is the very man they attacked, ha, ha, ha! the rogues have fallen in to their own snare.

Rev. What now you're a Justice of Peace—well said, Abrawang.

Am. Then, Sir George, you know him too?

Sir Geo. Know him, to be sure I do.

Rev. Still, Sir George—what then you will not resign your Knighthood! Madam, I'm happy to see you again. Ah, how do you do, my kind host? *(to Banks.)*

Lady A. I rejoice at thy safety, be reconcil'd to him. *(To Sir George.)*

Sir Geo.

Sir Geo. Reconcil'd, if I don't love, respect and honour him, I should be unworthy of the life he rescued—but who is he?

Har. Sir, he is——

Rov. Dick, I thank you for your good wishes, but I'm still determin'd not to impose on this Lady. Madam, as I first told that well-meaning tar, when he forc'd me to your house, I'm not the son of Sir George Thunder.

John. Then I wish you was the son of an Admiral, and I your father.

Har. You refuse the lady—to punish you, I have a mind to take her myself my dear Cousin.

Rov. Stop Dick, if I who adore her won't, you shall not, no, no. Madam, never mind what the fellow says, he's as poor as myself, isn't he, Abrawang?

Har. Then my dear Rover, since you are so obstinately interested, I'll no longer teize my father, whom you here see, and in your strolling friend, his very truant Harry that ran from Portsmouth Academy, and joined you and fellow Comedians.

Rov. Indeed!

Har. Dear Cousin forgive me, if through my zeal for the happiness of my friend, I endeavoured to promote your's, by giving you a husband, more worthy than myself.

Rov. Am I to believe, Madam, is your uncle Sir George Thunder in the room?

Lady A. He is.

Rov.

Row. Then you are in reality, what I've had the impudence to assume, and have perplex'd your father with my ridiculous effrontery. I told you, (*to John*) I was not the person you took me for, but you must bring your damn'd Chariot—I am ashamed and mortified—Madam, I take my leave.

Eph. Thou art welcome to go.

Row. Sir George, as the father of my friend, I cannot lift my hand against you, but I hope, Sir, you'll apologize to me apart.

Sir Geo. Aye, with pleasure, my noble splinter. Now tell me from what dock you were launched, my heart of oak?

Row. I heard in England, Sir; but from my earliest knowledge, till within a few years I've been in the East Indies.

Sir Geo. Beyond seas—well, and how?

Row. It seems I was committed an infant to the care of a lady, who was herself obliged by the gentle Hyder Ally to strike her toilet, and decamp without beat of drum, leaving me a chubby little fellow, squatted on a carpet; a serjeant's wife alone returned, and snatched me off triumphant, through fire, smoke, cannon, cries, and carnage.

Lady A. (to Amelia) Dost thou mark?

Am. Sir, can you recollect the name of the town where——

Row. Yes, Madam, the town was Negapatnam.

Am. I thank you, Sir.

Row.

Rov. An officer, who had much rather act Hotspur on the stage than in the field, brought me up behind the scenes at the Calcutta theatre, I was enroll'd on the boards, acted myself into favour of a colonel, promised a pair of colours, but impatient to find my parents, hid myself in the steerage of a homeward-bound ship, assumed the name of Rover, from the uncertainty of my fate, and having murdered more Poets than Rajas, stepped on English ground unincumbered with rupees or pagodas.—Ha, ha, ha! would'st thou have come home so, little Ephraim?

Eph. I would bring myself home with some money.

Am. Excuse my curiosity, Sir—what was the lady's name in whose care you were left?

Rov. Oh, Madam, she was the lady of a Major Linstock, but I heard my mother's name was Seymour.

Sir Geo. Why, Amelia!

Am. My son!

Rov. Madam!

Am. It is my Charles. (*embraces him*)

John. Tol de lol!—(*dances a hornpipe step*)—Tho' I never heard it before, my heart told me he was a chip of the old block, your father there. (*pointing to Sir George.*)

Rov. Can it——

Am. Yes, my son, Sir George Thunder here is Captain Seymour, in search of whom you may have heard I quitted England.

Rov.

Row. Heavens, then have I attempted to raise my hands against a parent's life.

Sir Geo. My brave boy—then have I a son with spirit to fight me as a sailor, yet defend me as a father.

Lady A. Uncle, you'll recollect 'twas I first introduced this son to thee.

Sir Geo. And I hope you'll next introduce a grandson to me, young Slyboots.—Harry, you have lost your fortune.

Har. Yes, Sir—but I've gained a brother, whose friendship, before I knew him to be such, I prized before the first fortune in England.

Row. My dearest Rosalind.

Am. Then, will you take our Charles?

Lady A. Yea; but only on conditions.

Sir Geo. What are they?

Lady A. Thou bestowest thy fortune on his friend and brother—mine is sufficient for us both, is it not?

Row. Angelic creature! to think of my generous friend. But now for As You Like It; where's Lamp and Trap. I shall ever love a play, a spark from Shakespeare's muse of fire was the star that guided me through my desolate and bewildered maze of life, and brought me to these unexpected blessings.

To merit friends so good, so sweet a wife,

The tender husband be my part for life.

My Wild Oats sown, let candid Thespian laws

Decree that glorious harvest—your applause.

F I N I S.